



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor
Department of Planning & Development
D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION OF THE DIRECTOR
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT**

Application Number: 2307838
Applicant Name: Washington State Convention and Trade Center
Address of Proposal: 800 Union Street
Council File Number: 306440

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Council Land Use Action for future construction of a 2,400 sq. ft. addition to the sixth floor kitchen of an existing convention center, known as the Washington State Convention and Trade Center (WSCTC). No change in parking is proposed.

SEPA DETERMINATION: ☒ Exempt ☐ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS

☐ DNS with conditions

☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading, or demolition,
or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND DATA

Site and Vicinity Description

The convention center site extends over Interstate 5, with Hubbell Place on the east, Freeway Park to the south, Seventh Avenue to the west, and Pine Street to the north. The land east of the I-5 centerline is zoned Highrise (HR); the property to the west is zoned Downtown Office Core 1 and 2 (DOC 1 and DOC 2).

Uses in the DOC zones are highly urbanized and include the convention center, office buildings, hotels, and the Eagles building. Uses in the vicinity of Hubbell consist of the existing

convention center, multi-family buildings, including the Cambridge Apartments (10 stories, 153 units), and the Electra condominiums (14 stories, 196 units), and the Summerfield Suites hotel (9 stories, 193 rooms). The Freeway Park garage is also located along Hubbell, as is the entrance to the convention center loading dock. The predominant use to the south is the convention center structure, which ties into Freeway Park.

Proposal Description

Council Land Use Action for future construction of a 2,400 sq. ft. addition to the sixth floor kitchen of the existing convention center (WSCTC). The kitchen expansion is on Level 6, adjacent to the existing kitchen; the kitchen would be expanded onto the roof of the convention center in the portion of the site that is zoned Highrise. Expansions of convention centers are permitted in the HR zone, per SCM 23.45.106G, pursuant to a council conditional use permit (CCUP).

The WSCTC seeks to expand its kitchen in order to improve efficiency. The additional square footage would accommodate a formal bakery area, additional coolers, and food preparation areas. Construction would require the temporary removal of some landscaping and planters, which would be replaced following construction. The project will not increase the capacity of the convention center, nor will it increase the number of events or delegates to the site. No change in parking is proposed.

ANALYSIS—COUNCIL CONDITIONAL USE

The Seattle Land Use Code provides as follows: “The location or expansion of a public convention center may be permitted in the Highrise Zone through a Type IV Council land use decision.” (SMC § 23.45.106 G) The Code then sets forth specific criteria that shall be considered in evaluating and approving, conditioning or denying public convention center proposals.

1. In making its decision, the Council shall determine whether the facility serves the public interest. This determination shall be based on an evaluation of the public benefits and the adverse impacts of the facility. The Council shall approve the facility only if it finds that public benefits outweigh the adverse impacts of the facility, which cannot otherwise be mitigated.

The City Council has issued two previous CCUP's: one for the original facility (C.F. No. 293257), and one for the expansion project (C.F. No. 297229). The WSCTC is an important public asset. The convention center generates significant economic benefits to the City, including tax revenue from delegate spending. The facility has been designed to incorporate a number of public amenities, including public spaces, art, and open space. The proposed minor kitchen expansion will allow the facility to continue to serve its clients, and will not generate any significant new impacts. The facility will be only 2,400 square feet. No additional traffic or environmental impacts will be generated, because the capacity of the facility will not be increased. There will be no change in the number of events or delegates attracted to the facility.

Food service is an important aspect of the convention business. The applicant states that when a kitchen facility does not run efficiently, it may affect repeat business, or the reputation of the

facility. It is, therefore, in the public interest to have a kitchen that runs efficiently. There are no adverse impacts that outweigh the public benefits.

2. *In evaluating the public benefits and adverse impacts of a proposed convention center, the Council shall consider, but is not limited to, the following factors:*

- a. *Economic impacts including, but not limited to, the net fiscal impacts on The State of Washington and City of Seattle, increased employment opportunities, demand for new development and increased tourism in the City and state;*

The WSCTC generates significant direct and indirect economic benefits to the state. The fiscal benefits were acknowledged by the City Council in the original CCUP, and reaffirmed in the CCUP for the expansion project. The WSCTC benefits are also detailed in each annual report, a copy of which is provided to the City each year. As set forth in the 2003 Annual Report, these benefits include:

CONVENTION CENTER-RELATED TAXES FLOWING
TO LOCAL INSTITUTIONS

IMPACT OF THE CONVENTION CENTER (FORECAST)	
King County (1998-2020)	\$134,776,374
City of Seattle (1998-2020)	76,216,442
Seattle School District (1998-2020)	14,240,118
Regional Transit Authority (1997-2020)	26,279,178
Arts and Culture Organizations (1997-2012)	10,162,473
TOTAL	\$261,674,585

In terms of overall economic impact, an average of over \$505,000 per day went directly in Washington State's economy from delegates attending events at the convention center during fiscal 2003. In addition to the hundreds of people directly employed by the convention center, thousands more work in the hotels, restaurants, and travel-related businesses that serve the convention and visitor industries.

The proposal will not increase the capacity or economic benefits of the facility. However, improvements to the food service facilities are an important aspect of remaining competitive in the convention industry and thus in maintaining the existing market share.

- b. Public amenities incorporated in the project including, but not limited to, open spaces accessible to the public and improved pedestrian circulation systems;*

The convention center incorporates significant public amenities, including public areas, art, and open space accessible to the public. One of the main features of the facility is that it created an improved pedestrian connection from First Hill to downtown. None of these amenities will be impacted by the minor expansion. The expansion will be on Level 6, the roof. Any landscaping removed will be replaced.

- c. The relationship of the project to its surroundings with respect to height, bulk, scale, massing, landscaping, aesthetics, view enhancement or blockage, shadows and glare;*

There will be no increased height to the facility. The bulk and massing will not be significantly affected, as the addition is only 2,400 square feet. The height of the addition will be kept below the height of adjacent walls to minimize the scale, and aid in transition of the building edges. The addition does not increase the overall footprint of the facility, because it is on a roof adjacent to an existing kitchen. Any landscaping removed will be replaced. No view impacts will occur.

- d. Impacts of the facility on traffic, parking, street systems, transit and pedestrian circulation;*

There will be no adverse impacts to traffic, parking, street systems, transit or pedestrian circulation. The capacity of the facility is not expanding.

- e. Impacts of the facility on existing residential development in the vicinity of the project, including but not limited to direct and indirect housing loss;*

There will be no housing loss, or anticipated impacts on nearby housing in the HR zone. The addition is minor kitchen expansion. The design of the existing facility will be maintained. Landscaping will continue to be used to soften the edge of the facility.

- f. Impacts of the facility on local governmental services and operations, including, but not limited to police and fire protection, and water, sewer and electric utilities;*

The minor kitchen expansion is not expected to impact utilities. There is no increase in the number of events or delegates. It is intended to improve the efficiency of the kitchen. There will be no increased demand on police, fire, or sewer. The electrical and water requirements of the new kitchen will be within available capacity. The facility will be consistent with the Seattle Energy Code.

- g. Impacts of the facility relative to noise and air quality;*

The expansion will comply with any code requirements for air quality or noise. After construction, the noise and air quality impacts are expected to be no greater than the existing conditions.

- h. Cumulative impacts of the project on governmental services and facilities, natural systems, or the surrounding area, considering the project's impacts in aggregate with the impacts of prior development and the impacts of future development which may be induced by the project;*

There are not expected to be any cumulative impacts associated with the minor kitchen expansion. Considering the expansion in the aggregate with the existing facility, the 2,400 square foot expansion is minor. It will not increase the number of delegates or events. It is intended to improve food service for existing events.

- i. Additional information as the Council deems necessary to fully evaluate the proposal.*

Public Comment

No comment letters were received during the public comment period, which ended January 14, 2004.

RECOMMENDED DECISION—COUNCIL CONDITIONAL USE

DPD recommends approval of the proposal.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS—COUNCIL CONDITIONAL USE

DPD recommends the following condition:

Prior to Issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy

1. Any landscaping materials removed for construction or for the staging of materials related to construction shall be restored at the completion of construction and prior to issuance of a certificate of occupancy.

Signature: (signature on file) Date: February 2, 2004
Michael Dorcy, Land Use Planner
Department of Planning & Development
Land Use Services

MD:bg